

# CITY OF WILMINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

CITY OF WILMINGTON PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT

Winter 2013 Volume 13 Number 3

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Special insert-City progress report

## State of the City Address

Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m. at City Hall  
102 N. 3rd St.

Live on the web and GTV:  
[wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov)  
Time Warner Cable Ch. 8

Tune in to learn more about improvements the city has made over the past year and get a glimpse of what's coming up in the future.

## City's financial outlook improves, savings increases

According to a review provided to City Council in December, the city's financial outlook has improved after several years of cutbacks during the economic downturn.

### Highlights Include:

- City's current budget balanced;
- Funds that had been taken out of savings during the economic downturn have now been largely restored;
- City Council's adoption of the \$41 million, five-year improvement plan in this year's budget has significantly increased funding for streets and other public infrastructure; 5 cents of the city's tax rate is now dedicated to funding the plan and cannot be used for anything else;
- Wilmington's amount of debt is low compared to other cities in North Carolina.



## Balanced budget last year, this year

- ✓ Savings now 28% of city's General Fund budget
- ✓ Reduced spending and increased revenues = \$5.85 million back into city's savings account (savings important for emergencies such as hurricanes)
- ✓ City's fiscal health good heading into new year



[wilmingtonnc.gov/budget](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/budget)

CITY'S SAVINGS ACCOUNT

## \$10 million North 3rd Street Improvement Project completed



The 18-month, \$10.4 million project to improve the North 3rd Street gateway into the city is almost completed except for a few finishing touches. The project was a major overhaul for North 3rd Street from the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to Market Street, including the replacement of aging water and sewer lines, the installation of new sidewalks and the placement of power lines underground.

Four-lanes of traffic have been re-opened in most of the project area after a complete repaving of the street that is expected to last a minimum of 10 years before significant repairs are needed. An estimated 20,000-25,000 cars travel on 3rd Street each day. New traffic poles, crosswalks and street lights have also been added.



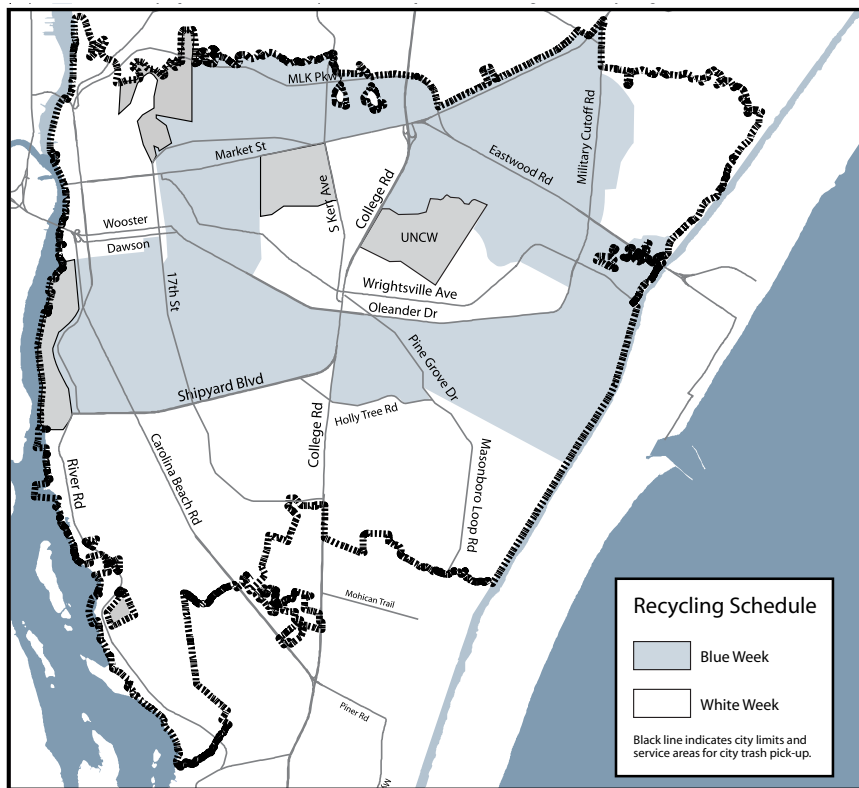
[wilmingtonnc.gov/North3rd](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/North3rd)

## Check the back

Want to find out how to help the environment by receiving this newsletter by email?

Want to learn more about the city on Facebook or Twitter?

Check out the back panel of this newsletter to find out more.



The city's recycling routes are roughly divided by blue and white colored pick-up weeks, as this map illustrates. Pickup schedules by individual address can be found on the city's website at [wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov).

## Big blue carts result in more recycling

The number of city residents who choose to recycle and how much they recycle has increased significantly since the city began its conversion to large blue recycling carts last spring. In November and December, the city delivered almost 20,000 carts and the number of city customers who choose to recycle has increased to 65%. In addition, the amount of materials customers are recycling has increased by more than 36 tons since the new carts started being delivered. Those numbers are expected to continue to increase, according to Solid Waste officials.

### New recycling pick-up schedule

Beginning Jan. 7, 2013, the city began picking up recycling every other week on the same day as trash collection, which continues to be picked up weekly. The city will save \$220,000 in annual manpower costs with the new schedule, and expects the amount of recycled materials to increase by up to 20% with the larger carts.

There are no changes in pick-up fees and no charge for the carts. Customers are welcome to keep their old recycling bins, but they will be picked up upon request by calling 910-341-7875. Trash and yard waste will continue to be picked up weekly on the same pick-up days.

What if I have questions or need to find out when my recycling will be picked up?

Call 910-341-7875 or visit [wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov)

## City sets Legislative Agenda for NC General Assembly session

The NC General Assembly convenes this month in Raleigh. The city will be working with lawmakers and other cities around the state to encourage the creation of legislation that will have a positive impact on Wilmington and the surrounding region.

The City Council has adopted a legislative agenda for the upcoming session that has three main focus areas:

- To obtain alternative local revenue source(s) as part of tax reform;
- To assist cities with needed street/transportation infrastructure and protect the environment;
- To support local job growth.

These focus areas are more important than ever to position Wilmington for long-term growth in the wake of laws passed last year that all but prohibit the ability of cities in the state to initiate annexations for growth.

The full agenda can be accessed on the city's website at [wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov).

## Convention Center hotel one step closer

The development company Harmony Hospitality, Inc. has met the city's deadline to apply for permission from Hilton Hotels to build a \$33.6 million, 186-room Embassy Suites as the convention center hotel. Embassy Suites is a Hilton brand hotel.

The deadline is included in the city's current agreement with Harmony Hospitality, which stipulated that the application to get a license for a national hotel franchise had to be submitted by Nov. 30, 2012. Harmony officials have informed the city that acceptance of the application is largely a formality because the Hilton criteria for hotel construction must be approved before an application can even be submitted.

Harmony's finalized application is a major milestone because it paves the way for the next steps that have to occur before construction begins, which includes completing project financing, finalizing an official purchase and development agreement with the city and the purchase of the property from the city to construct the privately-owned hotel.

The proposed 163,000-square-foot hotel will include a second story full-service restaurant and 6,600 square feet of meeting space. The all-suite hotel will be approximately 10 stories tall and will be similar in design to the Brier Creek Embassy Suites just outside of Raleigh.



Nighttime view of the convention center from the Cape Fear River

Did you know.....

- Convention Center is about 110,000 square feet
- Largest convention center on NC coast
- Center has environmentally friendly design

## City making progress on street paving and repairs



Parkway Drive



Bagley Avenue

The city's 2012-13 adopted budget includes funding for a 5-year, \$41 million maintenance improvement plan. The funds have been put into a separate account that cannot be used for anything else.

### SEVERAL STREETS ALREADY REPAVED

Work on the city's 5-year maintenance plan continues as part of the new \$41 million plan to make repairs to streets and other public facilities that had been put on hold during the economic downturn.

Repaving work has been completed on several city streets, including Ridgeway Drive, Highland Drive, Bordeaux Avenue, and Grace Street between 3rd and 4th streets. Work completed on Bagley Avenue, Pollock's Way and Parkway Drive included Stormwater improvements and repairs as well as street repaving.

### UPCOMING PROJECTS

Work is planned for several streets this spring, including: Park Avenue, Rose Avenue, Clear Run Drive, College Acres Drive, Cardinal Drive and portions of the 17th Street Extension.

Last year, the city completed a study on the condition of all streets within the city limits and a priority list has been developed based on factors such as pavement condition and daily traffic use. Street improvements are being coordinated with upcoming stormwater and utility projects to minimize impacts to citizens. A map showing street-by-street pavement conditions, as well as a list of priority roads to be repaired, is available on the city's website at [wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan).

 [wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan)

## WFD graduates 17 new firefighters

Seventeen recruits in the Wilmington Fire Department became firefighters in December after successfully completing a six-month training course. Wilmington is among the 1.4% of communities across the country to be rated as a Class 2 or higher, making it among the top in the nation. These ratings are based on national and state criteria that include factors such as how quickly personnel can get to a fire, the quality and number of fire trucks and other equipment available to fight fires, and how many firefighters there are to respond to emergencies.



WFD Honor Guard at graduation ceremony

 [wilmingtonnc.gov/fire](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/fire)

 [Facebook.com/WilmingtonFD](https://Facebook.com/WilmingtonFD)

## Flooding relief coming to Cardinal Drive area

A \$673,000 project to improve stormwater drainage in the area of Cardinal Drive/George Trask Drive began this month.

This project includes underground piping, several new culverts under Cardinal Drive, and new and improved open drainage channels. These drainage improvements will help alleviate flooding that has long been a problem in the area.

The project is a continuation of drainage improvements that began in this same area with the \$1.5 million Market Street/Inland Greens project completed in 2009.

A new Inland Greens project will get underway this spring and will include extensive stormwater improvements on the city-owned Inland Greens golf course and Wiregrass Road, as well as design and construction of a park and a 9-hole, par-3 golf course. The project is expected to be completed next fall.



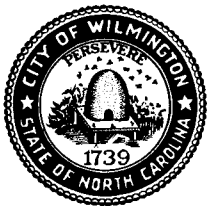
 [wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater)





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Communications Office, P.O. Box 1810,  
Wilmington, NC 28402-1810

**General Information Phone Numbers**  
Citizen Services Information .....341-7800  
Emergency .....911  
Police/Non-Emergency .....343-3600  
    To find the police district assigned to your neighborhood,  
    see [wilmingtonnc.gov/police](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/police)  
Fire/Non-Emergency .....341-7846  
Parks and Recreation .....341-7855  
Parks Hotline .....341-7852  
Street Maintenance .....341-7879  
Parking .....762-5678  
Zoning .....254-0900  
Trash pickup/Recycling .....341-7875  
Stormwater .....341-4646  
Cape Fear Public Utility Authority .....332-6550  
Code Enforcement .....341-3266

Look for the  for information

Want to receive this  
newsletter by email?

In an effort to save money and trees, citizens  
can sign up to receive this newsletter by email  
instead of direct mail. If you are interested,  
please email the city with your name and  
regular mailing address to:

[newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov](mailto:newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov)


**City Council Meetings**  
City Council meetings are generally held on  
the first and third Tuesday of the month at  
6:30 p.m. at City Hall. For more information,  
see the city’s web site at: [wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov)


**City Council Meetings on GTV8**  
Council meetings are broadcast live on GTV8, the  
city channel on Timewarner Cable. Council meet-  
ings are replayed:


- ~ Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, the week of  
the Council meeting at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- ~ Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, the week after  
the Council meeting at 11:30 p.m.

**This Week From City Hall**  
Catch a summary of city events and activities on  
GTV8’s “This Week From City Hall,” airing twice  
daily at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. New episodes are  
available on the 1st and 15th of each month.

**GTV8 online**  
All GTV8 programming can be found on the city’s  
website, live or on-demand. From the front page,  
simply click on “online videos.” Then, select the  
program you want to watch.

 **The city on the web**  
[wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov)

 Get city information on Facebook at:  
[www.facebook.com/cityofwilmington](http://www.facebook.com/cityofwilmington)

 You can also follow the Wilmington Police  
and Fire Departments on Twitter:  
[www.twitter.com/WilmingtonPD](http://www.twitter.com/WilmingtonPD)  
[www.twitter.com/WilmingtonFD](http://www.twitter.com/WilmingtonFD)